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Subcommittee Holds Hearing to Examine Policies and Benefits Available to Deployed Federal Employees

Federal civilian employees serving in designated combat areas face unique challenges

WASHINGTON, D.C. – On Wednesday, September 16, 2009 at 2:00 p.m. in room 2154 of the Rayburn House Office Building, the Subcommittee on Federal Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia will hold a hearing entitled, “A Call to Arms: A Review of Benefits for Deployed Federal Employees.”

The purpose of the hearing is to examine existing policies and the range of employee benefits available to federal civilian employees serving in designated combat areas. In addition to reviewing special agency pay and leave flexibilities, the hearing will also examine medical and worker compensation benefits in order to determine the necessity of potential benefit changes.

Since 2001, over 35,000 federal employees have been deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan in support of ongoing combat missions, political and economic development efforts, and state reconstruction projects related to Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. This marked increase in the deployment of federal civilian workers to high-risk combat environments has posed significant policy and administrative challenges, as current and formerly deployed federal employees report inconsistencies in pay, leave, and workers compensation benefits, as well as medical care.

“As the federal government continues the ‘diplomatic surge’ and expands the use of our civilian workforce in high-threat areas such as Iraq and Afghanistan, we must ensure that we are able to address the unique needs of our deployed federal workers and their families, and care for those federal employees appropriately when they are injured in the service of our country,” said Chairman Stephen F. Lynch. “Reports of benefit discrepancies, bureaucratic hurdles, and inaccessibility to quality medical care in the case of returned deployed federal employees are extremely concerning and accordingly, require a comprehensive assessment regarding the adequacy of current federal benefits packages and policies in this area.”

Notably, civilian benefit programs, including the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program (FEHBP), the Federal Employees’ Group Life Insurance Program (FEGLI), and the Office of Workers’ Compensation Programs (OWCP), do not currently address the unique nature of combat conditions. Additionally, deployed federal employees are not presently afforded access to the Veterans’ Affairs (VA) system and its nationwide system of hospitals and physicians.

Witnesses’ testimonies, the Chairman’s opening statement, can be found on the Subcommittee’s website, www.federalworkforce.oversight.house.gov

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Documents and Links

- [Testimony of Mr. Steven Browning](#)
- [Testimony of Ms. Brenda Farrell](#)
- [Testimony of Ms. Marilee Fitzgerald](#)
- [Testimony of Mr. Shelby Hallmark](#)
- [Testimony of Ms. Susan Johnson](#)
- [Testimony of Mr. Jerome Mikowicz](#)
- [Testimony of Dr. Jonathan Shay](#)